



July 20, 2021

Tuesday of the Sixteenth Week of Ordinary Time

Dear Parishioners:

I hope this note finds you well!

I am very much looking forward to the return of a modified Annual SummerFest with our Parish Picnic this Sunday from 1-4pm! It will be different this year, but unlike last year, we are having something. Our “Old-Fashioned” Parish Picnic will include beverages, live music, some food available for purchase from both European’s Best and Olympia Sweet Treats and Grill and the Euclid Beach Rocket Car. If you wish, you can bring your own picnic basket or food, but please plan to come together to enjoy one another’s company outside in the Front Yard! We hope to go back to a “full” picnic next summer! Our Parish Golf Outing is Saturday, August 7 and all information can be found by either calling the Parish Office or visiting www.sjohio.org/golf. Please feel free to invite your neighbors, family, and friends to join you. Let’s celebrate our community and enjoy ourselves as members of the community of St. Joseph!

Secondly, thank you again for your adapting back into a more normal experience of worship! Our loosened guidelines are still available at www.sjohio.org/covid and beginning July 31, we will become even more normal as we return to having an Offertory Procession, beginning all the Masses from the Gathering Area again, and welcoming back our regularly-scheduled Liturgical Ministers. Beyond our COVID-19 protocols, at the same URL you can find updated guidelines for all of our Liturgical Ministers and our constantly updated “attendance trackers” for Mass attendance. We are now hovering around 60% of our pre-pandemic attendance! Based upon conversations with other priests, that’s pretty similar to what many parishes are experiencing at this point. You have probably noticed that Holy Water is now back at the doors of the church... Special thanks to Dennis Crose for some extreme deep-cleaning and sealing of them and our Martha Ministers who will keep them fresh and clean each week! While it’s customary to sign ourselves with Holy Water (as it’s a sacramental) on the way into church to remind us of our baptism, it’s not necessary to do so on the way out, especially at Mass as we have just received Jesus in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Who can beat that?! Just some friendly Holy Water trivia...

Thirdly, and admittedly, a difficult subject to write about again this month, as it deals with Father McWilliams. As you are most likely aware of by now, “the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland was made aware Friday afternoon [July 16] of the guilty plea of Rev. Robert McWilliams, former parochial vicar at St. Joseph Parish in Strongsville. We are grateful to the law enforcement agencies and prosecutors for diligently seeking justice in this matter. Furthermore, with the resolution of the criminal charges against McWilliams, the Diocese is now able to pursue the removal of McWilliams from the clerical state. Let us pray for healing for all those who have experienced sexual abuse. The Diocese of Cleveland is committed

to creating a safe environment for children and fostering healing for those who have experienced abuse.” Beyond calling law enforcement, “anyone with information or simply in need of help can reach the diocesan confidential response line by phone at 216-334-2999 or online at response_services@dioceseofcleveland.org.” He is slated to be sentenced in November. As people of faith, we ought to continue our prayers for all who have been affected by this.

I know that it is likely that some parishioners may still be dealing with many emotions in the wake of his charges and perhaps now, even more so, in the wake of his plea. You may recall that in January 2020 we arranged for an evening with an outreach counselor from Catholic Charities, yet as the time has gone on, others may have found themselves struggling. I, along with our entire staff, again want to make sure that you have access to any resources or assistance that you may need. Beyond their own resources, Catholic Charities offered the following local resources during our meeting:

Strongsville Family Counseling
strongsvillefamilycounseling.com
440.238.0008

Nancy Lowrie and Associates
lowrieandassociates.com
440.846.0862

Strongsville Psychological Services
strongsvillepsychological.com
440.234.9955

We are thankful for the time and thoughts offered by the Community-Based Family Services of Catholic Charities. It is important that each one of us remains vigilant for any suspicious behavior, whether online, in-person or anywhere in between, and report such to your local law enforcement agency and the Diocesan Response Service at (216) 334-2999 or us. Please know that our Parish Pastoral Staff and Catholic Charities remain committed to assisting anyone who may still be struggling. Please let us know!

Have a blessed remainder of the week. I hope to see you at our Picnic on Sunday!

St. Joseph, pray for us,
~Fr. Joe